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REVIEWS OF RECENT BOOKS

Parts IV and V of "Representative Art of Our Time," published by John Lane, are fully up to the standard of the three preceding parts, already noticed in these pages. They comprise essays "On the Development and Practice of English Water-Color," by Walter Shaw Sparrow, and on the "Value of Line in Etching and Dry-Point," by Dr. Hans W. Singer, together with representative examples of the work of D. Y. Cameron, Sir George Reid, Frank Brangwyn, Francis E. James, Claude Monet, H. Cassiers, Joseph Pennell, Henri Rivière, Eleanor Fortesque-Brickdale, Mark Fisher, Nico W. Jungmann, and P. Wilson Steer. Both text and pictorial features are worthy of the highest praise.

* The intense interest manifested of late in the beautifying of American cities makes important the publication of such a work as "Modern Civic Art," by Charles Mulford Robinson, lately issued from the press of G. P. Putnam's Sons. The thinking public has at last awakened to the fact that mere municipal makeshifts need and should not be tolerated, that principles of beauty can and should be incorporated with the purely utilitarian features of every city.

As a matter of fact, there are now new standards of beauty and dignity for towns. The science of modern city-making is being formally laid down as its principles are discovered and its rules enunciated. The true ideal that spurs to useful endeavor is that alone which is based on study and facts. A concise statement, therefore, of these principles and rules must be of value to every one interested in municipal improvement.

This is exactly what Mr. Robinson gives in his work. He sees for American cities a new day, and he discusses the part that civic art must of necessity take. He considers the city's focal points—its water approach, land approach, and administrative center; the business district—its street plan, its architecture, the furnishings of its streets, and its adornment of fountains and sculpture; the residential sections—street platting among the homes, the great avenues, the minor residential streets, and the tenement districts; and lastly, the city at large—its comprehensive planning, its open spaces, its parkways, the distribution, location, and development of parks, and its temporary or occasional decoration. These subjects are all treated in detail, and since the book voices the opinions of one who has made a careful study of municipal art and is recognized as an authority on the subject, the work should have wide currency among those who are striving to free our cities and towns from the curse of the ugly which has hitherto so largely dominated them.

* "The Hundred Best Pictures," in seventeen parts, arranged and edited by C. Hubert Letts, and published by Charles Letts & Co., is an art work of unusual beauty and interest. One is inclined to quarrel with the publishers over the title selected for the work rather than over the quality of the hundred photogravures which constitute the collection. Many, if not most, of these prints are almost faultless as examples of reproductive work. For Mr. Letts, however, to call his collection "The Hundred Best Pictures" is an ex-cathedra statement for which there is little warrant or excuse. It is a somewhat presumptuous undertaking for any person to select at will one hundred pictures and label them the hundred best pictures in existence. Had the compiler called his work "A Hundred of the Best Pictures" he would have screened himself from much hostile criticism as to the soundness of his judgment.

The work gives examples of the art of seventy-four painters—twenty-five English, sixteen French, ten Italian, eight Dutch, seven German, three Flemish, two Spanish, two American, and one Russian. Sargent and Whistler are the only Americans included in the list. That many of the world's acknowledged masterpieces are given goes without saying; for the rest, the collection reflects Mr. Letts's taste, or stands witness to the limitations imposed upon him in the acquisition of available material.

* "The Meaning of Pictures," by John C. Van Dyke, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, is a most readable and informing little volume on the subject of the fine arts. The book comprises six lectures given for Columbia University at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the author has acted wisely in making his appeal to a wider audience than that which first greeted him.

Just how we should look at pictures, just how we should judge them, the author declares is not for any one person to say. We all have our different ways of estimating art; and art is capable of being estimated in different ways. In these lectures Mr. Van Dyke has endeavored to set forth the various points of view. The painter's conception has doubtless received the primary attention, but he has also given the public's conception of pictures.

The author is in no way dogmatic—he simply presents his own conclusions and the reasons for them and leave the reader to accept or reject them as he pleases.



BOOKS RECEIVED

"Modern Civic Art," by Charles Mulford Robinson. G. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50 net.

"Representative Art of Our Time," Parts VI. and VII., edited by Charles Holme. John Lane. \$1 each.